

In The Claims

1 – 5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A friction material comprising a fibrous base material impregnated with at least one curable resin, the fibrous base material comprising a porous primary layer and one secondary layer, the secondary layer comprising partially carbonized carbon fibers on at least one surface of the primary layer, the partially carbonized carbon fibers comprising 3% to about 90% of the surface area of the primary layer, wherein the secondary layer comprises about 5% to about 35%, by weight, of partially carbonized carbon fibers, based on the weight of the fibrous base material, wherein the partially carbonized carbon fibers are 65 to 90% carbonized, and wherein the porous primary layer comprises a plurality of less fibrillated aramid fibers having a freeness of at least about 300 on the Canadian Standard Freeness (CSF) index, and optionally one or more of the following: cotton fibers, carbon fibers, carbon particles, and, at least one filler material.

7. (Original) The friction material of claim 6, wherein the less fibrillated aramid fibers have a freeness of about 430 to about 650 on the Canadian Standard Freeness index.

8. (Original) The friction material of claim 6, wherein the aramid fibers have average fiber lengths in the range of about 0.5 to about 10 mm.

9. (Original) The friction material of claim 6, wherein the filler comprises diatomaceous earth.

10 – 11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) The friction material of claim 6, wherein the primary layer comprises about 10 to about 50%, by weight, less fibrillated aramid fiber; about 10 to about 35%, by weight, carbon particles; about 5 to about 20%, by weight, cotton fibers; about 2 to about 15%, by weight, carbon fibers; and, about 10 to about 35%, by weight, filler material.

13. (Original) The friction material of claim 12, comprising in percent, by weight, about 38 to 40% less fibrillated aramid fibers, about 13 to about 15% carbon particles; about 10 to about 12% cotton fibers; about 4-6% carbon fibers; and about 28 to about 30% filler material.

14 – 22. (Canceled)

23. (Withdrawn) A process for producing a friction material comprising the steps of:

forming a fibrous base material comprising aramid fibers,
coating about 3% to about 90% of at least one surface of the porous fibrous base material with partially carbonized carbon fibers, the partially carbonized carbon fibers being present at about 10 to about 30%, by weight, based on the weight of the fibrous base material,
impregnating the coated fibrous base material with a phenolic resin, or phenolic-based resin mixture, and
thereafter, curing the impregnated fibrous base material at a predetermined temperature for a predetermined period of time.

24. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 23, in which the aramid fibers are mixed with carbon particles, cotton fibers, carbon fibers and at least one filler material to form the fibrous base material.

25. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 23, in which the wherein the partially carbonized carbon fibers have an average length that ranges from about 0.5 to

about 6 mm and an average diameter that ranges in size from about 1 to about 15 μm .

26. (Withdrawn) A process for producing a friction material comprising of the steps of:

coating about 3% to about 90% of at least one surface of a porous fibrous base material with partially carbonized carbon fibers having an average length that ranges from about 0.5 to about 6 mm and an average diameter that ranges in size from about 1 to about 15 μm ., partially carbonized carbon fibers being present at about 10 to about 30%, by weight, based on the weight of the fibrous base material,

impregnating the coated fibrous base material with a phenolic resin, or phenolic-based resin mixture, and

thereafter, curing the impregnated fibrous base material at a predetermined temperature for a predetermined period of time.

27. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 26, wherein the fibrous base material comprises a plurality of less fibrillated aramid fibers having a freeness of at least about 300 on the Canadian Standard Freeness (CSF) index, and optionally one or more of the following: cotton fibers, carbon fibers, carbon

particles, and, at least one filler material.

28. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 27, in which the fibrous base material comprises a plurality of less fibrillated aramid fibers having a freeness of at least about 430 to about 650 on the Canadian Standard Freeness (CSF) index.

29. (Previously Presented) The friction material of claim 6 wherein the primary layer further comprises about 5% to about 35%, by weight, of partially carbonized carbon fibers, based on the weight of the primary layer, and wherein the partially carbonized carbon fibers of the primary layer are 65 to 90% carbonized.